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ABSTRACT

Whilst previous researchers have investigated stereotyping in contexts such as the tourism experience, destination image, and media representations, more insights are needed about the initial psychological development of such behaviors. The present study explores how tourism management students are stereotyped in a business school setting. The insights are important because negative perceptions exacerbate the challenge of attracting high-quality prospects for tourism degree programs and producing graduates who enjoy favourable recognition by their peers and by industry. Tourism management students are future leaders who are critical to the long term sustainability and competitiveness of the tourism sector. In-depth interviews revealed three stereotyping themes: *personality attribution, legitimacy,* and *professionalism.* The study concludes by discussing potential stereotype-reducing strategies.

KEY WORDS:

Stereotypes, students, psychology, education experience, teaching

INTRODUCTION

Domestic and international factors have place pressure on international demand for higher education in tourism and hospitality. Only a small minority reside in a social science or environment faculty, and there are now few standalone tourism and hospitality schools in Australia (Dredge, 2012). Although tourism degrees may be offered alongside cognate areas such as hospitality and events, as well as sport, park management and recreation, many tourism-related programs coexist within a business department with longer established areas such as accounting, finance, marketing and human resources (Ring, Dickinger & Wöber, 2009).

This study investigates the stereotyping that tourism management students encounter in a business school setting. This research is timely, critical, and instructive for several reasons. First, previous research has shown that students hold stereotypes towards different majors in a business school setting (Crampton, Walstrom & Schamback, 2006; Noel, Michaels & Levas, 2003; Schlee, Curren, Harich & Kiesler, 2007). For example, in a study by Francisco, Noland and Kelly (2003), the authors found pervasive stereotypical views upheld by other students about accounting majors. Accounting majors were seen as not creative or risk-taking by other business students (Schlee et al., 2007) and engaged in uninteresting and boring work (Francisco et al., 2003). Yet, to the authors' knowledge, no research to-date has investigated the stereotyping of tourism management majors by other business students.

Second, student recruitment is an important consideration. Various business disciplines are vying for funding and attention, thereby placing pressure on educators to take note of student perceptions about their education. Student views will play a prominent role in informing senior university managers, prospective students, and the wider community through mechanisms such as satisfaction surveys, teaching reviews, and reports about career intentions. Third, the low

economic growth rates prevailing in developed countries make it probable that most tourism programs will continue to reside alongside established business specializations. A perception of deficient quality vis-à-vis other specializations can quickly propagate among existing students. Where negative perceptions prevail, it will be increasingly difficult to retain high-quality students and produce graduates who are favourably recognized by their peers and by industry. Though managers at department, faculty and university levels will play a key role in the allocation of funding and other resources, the attitudes of teaching faculty and students will also play a part in representing the interests of tourism education relative to other domains.

Many tourism research studies have investigated the incidence of stereotyping, including the impact of such behaviours in contexts such as tourism experiences (Scarles, 2012), destination marketing (Bender, Gidlow & Fisher, 2013), destination image (Buzinde, Santos & Smith, 2006), and media representations (Caton & Santos, 2008). Other researchers have investigated the effects of characteristics such as age, (Luoh & Tsaur, 2014), culture (Laxson, 1991), and gender (Sirakaya & Sonmez, 2000) in stereotypes. Yet, despite what Bender, Gidlow, and Fisher (2013) have described as the widespread acknowledgement of stereotypes in tourism studies, limited research has provided an in-depth understanding of the origins of stereotyping. More research is required to understand the psychology behind stereotype formation and retention. For instance, what psychological processes shape the formation of stereotypes? Once such stereotypes become established, why do they persist? Why are negative stereotypes more prevalent than positive ones? Finally from a management perspective, how can educators and industry practitioners combat the prevalence of negative stereotyping?

These questions were explored through a review of relevant literature on the application of cognitive psychology to top-down and bottom-up interactions, thereby providing a basis for

understanding the formation of stereotypes. Similarly, the literature review also provides insight into existing research on the processes that maintain and entrench such stereotypes and discusses why negative information is more influential in stereotypical evaluations than positive information. The present study concludes with a discussion about strategies that offer the prospect of reducing stereotypes so that practitioners and educators can address biases, improve the quality of tourism higher education, and facilitate positive and beneficial experiences for the development and personal growth of tourism students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism management education in business schools

Interest in tourism education has grown significantly over the last several decades and has fuelled an expansion in degree offerings and scholarly research (Jogaratnam el al., 2005). The academic institutions that house such activities commonly seek to contribute to their national and local economies, as well as to develop their international reputation and prestige (Park et al., 2011). However, universities are facing greater scrutiny, downward pressure on funding and fluctuating student enrolment patterns. Dredge et al. (2012) reported that stand-alone tourism schools in Australia have been increasingly subsumed into larger organizational units due to falling international student demand. Airey et al. (2014) drew upon data from Australia, China, and the United Kingdom to summarize the external influences on the positioning of tourism education: the method and level of funding and increasing internal and external scrutiny over quality and impact. The paper emphasized a tightening of government support, diversifying sources of funding (e.g., donations, revenues from university-affiliated enterprise and tuition), increased competition for students, and refocused curriculum and

pedagogical developments for furthering the consolidation of tourism management education into business studies.

The number of institutions offering higher education in tourism has fluctuated and most of the relevant programs are hosted in departments or faculties of business or their equivalent (Ring, Dickinger & Wöber, 2009). The main bright spots in tourism management education are evident in developing countries such as China. In the latter case the Ministry of Education has recently elevated the status of the tourism discipline (Yang & Song, 2010). According to official categorizations, there are two main types of tourism management Bachelor degrees in China: Tourism Management, and Exhibition Economy and Management (Yang & Song, 2010). Both are sub-disciplines of Business Management and Public Administration, respectively, and students are required to take nine common Business Management compulsory courses.

Importance of addressing stereotypes

Following a period of growth, tourism management education has now matured as a subject of study. To understand what lies ahead in increasingly prevalent business school settings, it is now timely for educators to gain a better understanding of how tourism management students are stereotyped by those studying other business disciplines.

Stereotyping in business higher education exists. Students in a business school hold stereotypes towards their peers in different specializations (Crampton, Walstrom & Schamback, 2006). For example, in a study by Schlee et al. (2007), the authors examined business students' perceptions of their peers in different majors including accounting, finance, marketing, international business, management, economics, and management information systems. They found that business students exhibited substantial stereotyping of students in a major other than

their own. Students in other majors perceived international business students as people-oriented and good communicators; management students as leaders and team players; marketing students as creative; and accounting and economics students as very talented in math. On the flipside, other business students rated finance students low on people orientation, flexibility, communication, and teamwork.

Past research into the stereotyping of business students suggest that the results could be useful for developing a clear profile of students by their major to provide a better understanding on how to better recruit, select, and develop focused education programs (Noel, Michaels & Levas, 2003). For instance, Albrecht and Sack (2000) identified that a lack of information and considerable stereotypical views about what accountants do was a considerable reason for declining enrolment in the program. Accountants are stereotyped as conservative and conscientious with good self-control while marketers are perceived to be extroverted, outgoing, and adaptable (Noel, Michaels & Levas, 2003).

Educators vying for funding and attention, and seeking to attract high-quality students may need to create positive distinctions between tourism management and other specialized programs. Whilst it is often claimed that tourism management subjects are essential for the development of domain specific conceptual understanding, there is some evidence that tourism management students have less interest in learning about tourism as a field of study than might be expected (King, McKercher & Waryszak, 2003). A study by King, McKercher, and Waryszak (2003), identified some common issues for tourism and hospitality providers in Hong Kong and Australia. The authors surveyed graduates from The Hong Kong Polytechnic University and Victoria University about the relative importance of various aspects of their course of study for securing an initial job after graduation and their current job, if different.

They found that tourism and hospitality graduates believed that their general business and education subjects played a stronger role in acquiring their first and current jobs than specialist tourism, hotel management, and food service subjects. In another study by Ring, Dickinger, and Wöber (2009), the authors provided a content analysis of 64 tourism-related bachelor programs taught in English mainly from Australia, United States, Canada, Spain, and Great Britain. Their analysis identified the importance and utility of the various subject areas and themes that collectively constitute a tourism program. Consistent with the results of previous research, most of the programs had a management orientation. Important management subject areas include management-service and management-tourism industry related themes in accounting, marketing, financial management, human resources and organizational behaviour.

Tourism educators are also divided about what elements if any are essential components of a tourism and hospitality management concentration in business school settings. This is worrisome from a student retention perspective as tourism management students – like their peers in other disciplines – are actively learning about, discussing, and possibly, justifying, their degree and course selections with fellow students. Scott, Puleo, and Crotts (2008) surveyed 28 hospitality and tourism management programs in the United States that were accredited by The Association to Advanced Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). The authors found little agreement on required courses beyond business core requirements of marketing, accounting, finance, strategy, and management and organizational behaviour.

Furthermore, tourism management is younger than many longer established fields that are prevalent in business school settings. A commonplace part of student life, regardless of specialization, is engaging in discussions with peers about why they selected their major. A prominent consideration for selecting and continuing in a specialization is the prospect of career

development after graduation. Yet the views about career prospects that are held by tourism students, – let alone by other students –differ substantially from those prevalent amongst industry operators. In a study by Dewar, Sayers, and Meyer (2002), the authors found that while tourism students were generally satisfied with their working conditions, many had unrealistically high salary expectations upon graduation. Tourism entry jobs for graduates in New Zealand were paid considerably less than their equivalents in other sectors. Over ten years later this remains a problem. Australian data suggest that starting salaries lags well behind those that apply to business and management graduates (Airey et al., 2014). Similarly, Brown, Arendt, and Bosselman (2014) found that managers responsible for hiring in the hospitality industry generally viewed the career prospects offered by organizations as adequate. This perception is divergent from the view that prevails amongst graduates who are seeking careers with better opportunities for promotion. Compared with graduates who remained in the hospitality and tourism sector, graduates who left the industry indicated it was more important to have a career where they could contribute to society.

Overall, this study explores the stereotypes that are faced by tourism management students and provides educators with an understanding of how such views are formed and maintained with a view to developing stereotype-reducing strategies. The next section addresses this issue by integrating scholarship from psychology that may assist educators, students, and industry practitioners to recognize the essence behind stereotypical behaviours.

Describing stereotypes

A stereotype may be described as an association of knowledge or expectations about the traits that characterize a group of people (van Knipperberg & Dijksterhuis, 2000). According to

Ratliff and Nosek (2011), stereotyping occurs when an individual applies a set of characteristics to someone whom they categorize as part of a group. Individuals more readily exhibit stereotypical behaviours towards groups that they view as homogenous, than those that they consider to be heterogeneous. Research has shown that similarity and attitudes are important factors in learning about associations (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006).

Many tourism researchers have examined stereotypical attributions as an example of damaging behaviours. As described by Todd, Galinsky, and Bodenhausen (2012), perceivers "possess a number of mechanisms whereby ambiguous information is assimilated to stereotypic expectancies and disconfirming information is discounted, overlooked, or otherwise minimized" (p. 95). This reflects the self-validating and self-perpetuating tendencies of stereotypical behaviours, which guide misperceptions and create prescriptive constraints (Schneider, 2005). Over time, the ascribing of a set of attributes may reduce an individual to a lesser position relative to others in society (Todd, Galinsky & Bodenhausen, 2012). A recent tourism study by Scarles (2012) described the fundamental role of photography as becoming reduced to "validating stereotypes as locals are positioned as abstracted and anonymous 'natives'; 'indigenous' and 'primitive' representations of culture" through the gaze of Western perceivers (p. 928).

Despite their negative associations, stereotypes serve various psychological functions from the perspective of the perceiver. Stereotypes may play a role in generating expectations and hypotheses about a social group and how its members are likely to act. This reduces the cognitive effort associated with processing information (Macrae, Milne & Bodenhausen, 1994). Stereotypes may also protect the self from perceived threats (Fein & Spencer, 1997), and justify the status quo (Jost, Banaji & Nosek, 2004). Ward and Berno (2011) showed that a lesser

perception of threat and more positive stereotypes lend support to the development of positive attitudes toward tourists.

Forming and maintaining stereotypes

Stereotypes are shaped by a combination of top-down and bottom-up processes. Reflective of an individual's expectations, desires and beliefs, top-down processes suggest that external information is processed more deliberately, and that information affects an individual's perceptions in a cognitive manner (Lee, Frederick &Ariely, 2006). Bottom-up processes suggest that evaluations are driven by the characteristics of a stimulus as perceived through an individual's senses (e.g., touching the texture of fabric) (Smith & Kosslyn, 2007). An individual's evaluation of an ambiguous figure may, for example, be determined by his/her prior beliefs, desires, and expectations and by the sensory perceptions of defining characteristics. When viewing various abstract paintings, individuals may observe different objects based on what they were told that they could see, despite the fact that the paintings are identical.

Interactions between the two processes become more salient when the stimulus is a person and not just an object. Affect and motivation play a part along with prior knowledge, and expectations about people. These interact with external sensory information to shape stereotypes. According to Freeman and Ambaby (2011), "our rich set of prior experiences with another person or the regularities in our experience with whole groups of people (e.g., sex, race, age) undoubtedly provide a lens through which we construe others" (p. 250).

To organize information that represents social groups, individuals create salient retrieval cues in memory that can be searched (Todd, Galinsky & Bodenhausen, 2012). This is commonly based on two notions – expectancy and relevance (Roese & Sherman, 2007). According to

Fyock and Stangor (1994), individuals often exhibit better recall of information that aligns with their existing stereotypes. Even in cases where individuals perceive information that is inconsistent with their stereotypes, they may reconcile it with the original stereotypical expectation in order to minimize the incongruence (Sherman, Conrey & Azam, 2005).

The maintenance of stereotypes involves a justification process in which perceivers explain the behaviours of another individual to verify the original bias (Todd, Galinsky & Bodenhausen, 2012). Perceivers seek stable, dispositional attributes to explain behaviours in order to support their stereotype that the individual's action is a result of internal characteristics within the individual and common across the social group (Jackson, Sullivan & Hodge, 1993). Conversely, perceivers invoke unstable, non-dispositional factors to cast away stereotype-inconsistent behaviours. Research has shown that perceivers exhibit a greater likelihood of such stereotypical explanatory behaviours in the case of face-to-face intergroup interactions (Sekaquaptewa et al., 2003).

The formation and maintenance of stereotypes is influenced by both top-down expectations and by bottom-up sensory information. These depend on how perceivers gather information about an individual. Perceivers typically gather information that is stereotype-consistent. Stereotypes will persist as individuals continue to collect information which confirms their initial expectations. Johnston and Macrae (1994) found that students gathered more confirming than disconfirming information when they could control the type and amount of information about a social group. The students rated the traits of the group according to their initial expectations.

Tourism researchers have assembled extensive documentation about how stereotypes are maintained. An early study by Palmer (1994) that was conducted in a Caribbean developing

country setting showed that the tourism industry in the Bahamas relies on colonial imagery and thereby perpetuates colonial ideology. He argues that this reinforces and prevents the locals from defining their own national identity. As Sturma (1999) recognized, the maintenance of stereotypes in tourism is reinforced through "narrative, fictions, arts and films" into a "representational loop" where stereotypical images are reiterated (p. 713). Tourism representations often reflect the attitudes, images and stereotypes of colonial legacies (Echtner & Prasad, 2003).

Evaluating negative information in stereotypes

Negativity bias in social evaluations refers to the influence of negative over positive information (Baumeister et al., 2001). Negative information exhibits a contagious effect; perceivers often extend the negative behaviour of an individual to others whom they view as forming part of the same social group, thereby strengthening the original stereotype (Rozin & Royzman, 2001). Such contagion is less likely in the case of positive information since perceivers revisit their initial stereotype only infrequently for groups that were based on the positive behaviour of a single individual. This supports the assertion that a significant amount of favourable information is required to disconfirm a negative stereotype, but very little information is needed to reconfirm a negative stereotype about a group that is already established (Mullen & Johnson, 1990).

Ratliff and Nosek (2011) identified clear differences in the formation and generalization of stereotypes towards ingroup versus outgroup members. Ingroup members refer to individuals that perceivers consider as being similar to them, whereas outgroup members are those who are perceived as part of a different social group. Participants explicitly judged Black people who

performed predominantly positive behaviour as more favourable than their White counterparts who performed the same behaviour. Similarly, Black targets were explicitly judged less negatively than their White counterparts when they performed predominantly negative behaviours. Implicitly, however, white targets were evaluated more positively than their Black counterparts when performing the same behaviour. The results suggest deliberate considerations by perceivers to avoid negatively evaluating outgroups, or to avoid explicit expressions of such negativity.

Addressing negative stereotypes has been a common research theme in tourism. Ketter and Avraham (2010) examined the use of media strategies to battle negative stereotypes and improve the national image of Sub-Saharan Africa. As Xiao and Mair (2006) suggested, cultural stereotypes can be created or reinforced through misrepresented newspaper coverage of destinations. Interestingly, such misrepresentations may even occur within the promotional literature of a non-profit program with humanitarian missions such as Semester at Sea (Caton and Santos, 2009). Caton and Santos (2009) found that Semester at Sea "continued to assert a Western superiority ideology by polarizing the West and the Rest into binaries of modern-traditional, technologically advanced-backward, and master-servant" despite a mission of promoting cross-cultural interaction and global citizenship (p. 191). The promotional material depicted the non-West as exotic, culturally pristine, and filled with happy natives. Bender, Gidlow, and Fisher (2013) examined how different language guidebooks on Switzerland vary in their representations and interpretations of the destination. They indicated that "contrary to common theoretical understandings, the content analysis shows that the guidebook authors tend to present 'in-groups' (their 'home cultures') in a more negative light than 'out-groups' (i.e., the Swiss nation)" (p. 331). The authors concluded that existing theories are insufficient as they

inadequately acknowledge the processes that are involved in production and consumption. The Caton and Santos (2009) and Bender, Gidlow and Fisher (2013) examples show that stereotypical evaluations are complex, and combine the embedding of positive and negative biases within the prevailing context. These observations support Ratliff and Nosek's (2011) finding that using processes of deliberate correction in order to be unbiased may result in explicit overcorrection.

STUDY METHODS

A qualitative research approach was chosen to explore the stereotypes that tourism management students encountered in a business school environment. In challenging the need for tourism researchers to focus excessively on measurement Bowen and Clarke (2009) have proposed giving closer attention to the meanings that are attached to concepts in routine daily settings and conversations as a means of gaining insights into the fundamentals . Pearce & Packer (2013) suggested conducting deeper investigations of how participants view their experiences in a social context. Tourism researchers have shown how qualitative techniques can be used to explore past experiences with a view to developing novel concepts (e.g., Culter, Carmichael & Doherty, 2014; Noy, 2004).

In the present study, in-depth interviews were conducted with graduates from the tourism management program at a large business school in Canada. There are approximately 3,000 students in the school undertaking undergraduate, post-graduate or executive education programs on a full- or part-time basis. The program has an emphasis on tourism management related courses in areas such as policy, planning and research, and tourism marketing although the

university campus is not located in a city that is generally considered a leisure tourism destination.

In the in-depth interviews, various open-ended questions prompted respondents to recollect their memories (Tung & Ritchie, 2011). Respondents were first asked to provide a detailed account of their academic history including their year of graduation and how long it took them to complete their degree. Next they identified why they selected a tourism management specialization, and described the responses of non-tourism business students when they discussed their specialization. In addition to answering the open-ended questions, respondents were asked to provide general demographic information (e.g. age, gender, and nationality).

The snowball sampling technique was used for data collection purposes. Respondents were asked to provide contact information for up to five graduates whom they felt would be willing to share their experiences. Snowball sampling has the advantage of penetrating populations that are difficult to access and of avoiding experimenter selection bias (Jackson, White & Schmierer, 1996). The in-depth interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes and were conducted in an environment which was conducive for reflection and which was a private space that would provide respondents with an assurance about confidentiality.

The study adopted an inductive, qualitative data analysis approach and identified themes based on participant transcripts (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This approach seeks depth and quality from the data, rather than results which can be generalized to the broader population (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Noting that "no analysis strategy will produce theory without an uncodifiable creative leap, however small" (Langley, 1999; 691), the following coding techniques were used in the analytic process.

First, detailed notes were assembled in order to add depth to the data, including as many verbatim quotes as possible. Next, the interview notes were subjected to data reduction (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This process involves moving from descriptive codes to fewer, conceptually abstract codes and is valuable to qualitative researchers with mass data or multiple cases (e.g., Brown & Eisenhardt, 1997; Maitlis, 2005). Each word or phrase that indicated a single concept was recorded. A word or phrase was deemed to indicate a single concept if it contained similar reference; for example, the concept of "compensation" could be captured by the phrase "well paying job" or simply by the word "salary."

Next, the descriptive codes were reduced to interpretative themes according to whether they were qualitatively similar or dissimilar in character (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Consistent themes were categorized internally on the basis of the research aims. For example, the concept of legitimacy was captured by the phrases "tourism does not belong in a business school" and "why is there a tourism specialization." It was essential for the researchers to remain open to the data in order to allow for theoretical concepts to emerge rather than through preconceived hypotheses from the literature (Hsu, Cai & Wong, 2007).

RESULTS

The total sample consisted of 46 respondents (i.e., 26 females and 20 males) between the ages of 22 and 26. All respondents had friends who specialized in other disciplines in the business school such as finance, marketing, accounting, and human resources management. Three distinct stereotypical themes emerged from the in-depth interviews. These were respectively: *personality attribution, legitimacy, and professionalism.*

The theme of *personality attribution* was apparent when respondents indicated that their peers jumped to conclusions about their attitudes, behaviours, and values because they were "tourism students." With respect to attitudes, respondents indicated that others made immediate assumptions about their "love to travel." One respondent noted that: "when I started school, the moment I told someone that I was a tourism student, the next thing they said was, 'you must like visiting new places'." This was typically followed by behavioural inquiries about their travel patterns: "you must have been everywhere"; "how many countries have you visited"; "do you travel a lot"? Respondents also described stereotypical values ascribed to them from a values perspective: for example, "you must value your free time" and "you must love learning about new cultures and history and meeting new people."

Some respondents described experiencing mixed feelings; initially, the attitude, behaviour, and value assumptions of free time and self-control provided them with a sense of pride. They had a "worldly feeling"; other students "envied us"; and it "felt like praises." However, after discussions with their peers and subsequent reflection, respondents noted feeling that they were not "taken seriously." One respondent noted that: "Initially I felt pretty good ... then I realized that he (i.e., the peer) thinks that my degree was all fun and stuff and I didn't do any serious work." Another respondent also indicated this belittled feeling: "He said he wished he could take tourism because he likes to travel but he actually needed to do real work so he chose accounting."

Respondents also reported that their peers questioned their *legitimacy* as business students. Many respondents were asked by their peers in other specializations to explain why their specialization existed alongside disciplines such as marketing, strategy, finance, and accounting. As one respondent indicated: "I was often challenged by other students …

sometimes I had a hard time explaining." Other recollections included: "they didn't think it fit"; "it is out of place"; and "tourism didn't belong in a business school." Some graduates felt degraded by their peers through statements that further challenged the legitimacy of their undergraduate education: "Some people I spoke with asked me why I needed a degree to work in tourism. They thought that all you needed was work experience." Others reported that their peers asked: "what do you really learn in tourism" and "do you really learn anything?" Respondents expressed feelings of frustration when they experienced condescension from their peers. Confronted by such stereotypes, many respondents addressed these questions unsuccessfully and stated that: "no matter what I told them, they just didn't understand"; "they didn't listen"; and "they understood other ones (specializations) like marketing, but they didn't get tourism."

Professionalism refers to stereotypes that suggested career or job-related biases toward tourism management graduates. This theme includes three main sub-dimensions: compensation, career progression, and designation. In the case of compensation, the first sub-dimension, many respondents experienced negative stereotypes from their peers regarding topics such as salary, benefits and working hours. Respondents were often asked: "how much would you make" and "do they pay well?" While some responses suggested positive stereotypes (e.g., "you get free rooms if you work at a hotel" and "cheap tickets (working) at an airline"), most were negative (e.g., "tourism grads don't make that much").

Interestingly, business students in other disciplines appeared to base their stereotypes on what they heard from others. One respondent noted that: "My friend said he didn't really know anything about the tourism major but he heard that it doesn't pay very well with long hours of work. When I asked him where he heard it, he just said that's what people say. In fact, he

actually told me to think about changing my major to marketing or something else because it's easier to find a job that pays well."

The second sub-dimension, career progression, represents career growth perceptions. Other business students frequently challenged respondents with statements such as: "what will you do after you graduate"; "what can you do with your degree"; "where will you work"; and "are there large companies that will hire you?" Career progression stereotypes were, in particular, more frequently mentioned by students who were in "the big three concentrations" of accounting, finance, or marketing. These students often contrasted their personal career paths with their understanding of careers in tourism. One respondent noted that: "My friend in accounting asked me what I would do after I graduated. He kept talking about how he would get into a Big Four (accounting firm), get his CA (Chartered Accountant designation), and go back to industry or stay there. Then he would either move up the ladder to become a controller or CFO (chief financial officer), or become a partner (at an accounting firm). He said it like he was sure it would happen. I guess that shows he was confident … I felt like I didn't have such a neatly laid out route …. or I didn't have such a clear idea when compared to him or other friends."

Respondents also indicated that their peers felt they were too "narrow" or "short-term focused." One tourism management graduate recalled: "She (another student) asked me where I would end up five years later … whether I would be doing the same thing. She thought I was going to end up doing a five-year gig and that I had no long-term plans because you 'can't just work at hotels forever even if you love to travel.'"

This finding illustrates how stereotypical themes are self-reinforcing (i.e., personality attribution and career progression). In this example, the respondent's peer sought to justify one

stereotype (e.g., regarding the lack of long-term career plans and five-year gig) towards the respondent based on another stereotype (e.g., tourism students 'must love travelling'). This supports previous findings that maintaining stereotypes involves justifications where the perceiver explains the behaviour of another individual in a way that verifies the original bias (Todd, Galinsky & Bodenhausen, 2012). Here, the other business student supported her career progression stereotype towards the respondent based on internal, personality characteristics that she deemed common across the social group.

The final sub-dimension was designation. For many business students particularly in the accounting and finance fields, their undergraduate degree is a step towards a professional designation. Tourism management students were not considered professionals by their peers and were challenged with questions such as: "what is a tourism professional"; and "are there professional designations in tourism?" Some designation questions were more job-specific: "will you be a professional tour guide"; and "professional hotel employee?" Remarkably, many respondents admitted that they were unfamiliar with post-degree designations or professional opportunities. They explained that they "realized it wasn't as straightforward as an accounting degree", but they "did not spend the time to look" into professional opportunities. Many respondents also recognized that they were always compared to their peers in more mainstream specializations. Business students in other disciplines who lacked an understanding of areas outside their specialization often justified their stereotypes by comparing disciplines they perceived as closely related. As one respondent described: "One of my friends didn't know anything about tourism. He thought it was the same as marketing where you didn't really need a degree to be a professional … you just needed to be good at selling stuff. He thought both were 'fluffy' majors where you didn't need to be good in math."

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

This study explored the formation and maintenance of stereotypes, and investigated the stereotypes that tourism management students confronted in a business school setting. Three distinct themes emerged: *personality attribution, legitimacy,* and *professionalism.* The application of stereotype-reducing strategies that address social group biases would benefit industry practitioners and educators as they could learn, recognize and address the development of stereotypical behaviour in their own settings.

Stereotype-reducing strategies involve perspective-taking, namely a capacity to contemplate another individual's psychological perspectives during social interactions (Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000). The goal is to enhance perspective-taking capacities that inspire positive social outcomes since deficient processes have been linked to social dysfunctions (Todd, Galinsky & Bodenhausen, 2012). Todd et al. (2011) showed that perspective-taking decreases intergroup prejudice and stereotype applications. It also increases an individual's retrieval of non-dispositional factors to explain an outgroup member's behaviour (Vescio, Sechrist & Paolucci, 2003).

To encourage perspective-taking, practitioners should encourage perceivers to give active consideration to the perspectives of others, thereby allowing them to step outside their usual mental routines and processing behaviours. Invoking imagery and encouraging multiple perspectives require highly active and cognitively demanding modes of information processing. Active, counter-stereotypic information is less likely to be assimilated into existing stereotypical expectations. This is the key to reducing stereotypes. Research has shown that the process

through which perceivers typically verify their expectations about the social group is highly passive (Nickerson, 1998).

This study proposes several potential stereotype-reducing strategies through the involvement of tourism students, faculty, and industry (see Table 1 for a summary). The responses clearly indicated that personality attributions are highly prevalent. Negativity bias was implicitly projected by other business students, despite their efforts to avoid being explicit through praising the sense of freedom associated with tourism management education. As noted by Ratliff and Nosek (2011), individuals are particularly attuned to negative information about others because of the consequences of judging a positive person as negative. Business students sought to avoid this by engaging in over-corrective behaviours (e.g., displayed a sense of envy). They were however unsuccessful in preventing their underlying biases (e.g., the view that tourism management students are not serious) from occurring implicitly. Educators are encouraged to celebrate the achievements of tourism management students –similarly to students in other specializations – so that administrators will take tourism education seriously. Ultimately this will provide a means of projecting the attributes of tourism management majors. It is also suggested that tourism management students should actively organize and participate in student clubs and academic competitions. Such involvements are common amongst their peers in finance and accounting, notably through participation in business case competitions. The recommendation is intended to challenge the stereotype maintenance process so that perceivers observe, explain, and interpret social information that disputes their biases.

In addressing the of legitimacy stereotype, educators can encourage students undertaking other business disciplines to contemplate their specializations and education in an active way if they were to choose an area outside their current major. This approach will enhance the capacity

of students to understand the applicability of various disciplines, including tourism management. More proactively, it is noted that students in many business schools are required to take introductory marketing, accounting and finance regardless of their specialization. The offering of other required introductory courses may relate to the strength of employment opportunities in the relevant field; for instance, introductory operations management was a required subject in the University where this study was conducted. Since tourism is a significant contributor to the economy in many destinations, tourism management may warrant inclusion as a requirement in the introductory set.

Furthermore, introductory business courses commonly provide students with an introduction to potential careers of the relevant specialization as well as to foundational theoretical knowledge of the field. An introductory course can address the stereotype, *professionalism*, and its sub-dimension, career progression. Through the passion and enthusiasm demonstrated by instructors in introductory lectures, the courses often attract students to select the specialization, thereby increasing subsequent enrolments in that major.

One should not underestimate the importance of student career centres for addressing compensation and designation stereotypes. University career centres provide a primary point of contact for career advice, resume, and job search support. They also provide a bridge between education and industry opportunities. Career centres often publish industry statistics for the various specializations on offer such as salary by year of graduation (e.g., first year after graduation) and degree-level (i.e., Bachelor, Master, and PhD). The extent to which career advisors are familiar with each specialization will impact on the advice that they provide and whether they are persuasive in urging students to select the applicable majors. It is suggested that educators should inform career advisors about the nature of tourism education and its

association with career opportunities. Similarly, tourism practitioners are encouraged to network proactively with career advisors so that advisors can facilitate the transfer of industry related information and knowledge to their students.

---Insert Table 1 about here

CONCLUSION

The goal of this paper was to investigate the education experiences of tourism management students in a business school setting. More specifically, the researchers sought to explore the stereotypes faced by tourism management students, and assist educators, students, and industry practitioners to recognize the essence behind stereotypical behaviours by integrating the relevant psychology literature. Research has demonstrated the contagion effect of negativity bias. Since poor experiences can quickly propagate amongst existing and prospective students, it is suggested that tourism faculty and students should address perceptions and apply stereotype-reducing strategies as a matter of urgency.

The stereotypical themes that have been identified in this study may be exacerbated by the effects of gender stereotyping on career progression (Skalpe, 2007). Past qualitative research indicates that women saw gender stereotyping as a problem for the industry (Ng & Pine, 2003). Various studies have also shown barriers to women's career development and earning differences in tourism and hospitality (Campos-Soria, Ortega-Aguaza & Ropero-Garcia, 2009; Thrane, 2008; Zhong, Couch & Blum, 2013). Women cluster at the lowest level of management in the functions of personnel and training, as well as conference and banqueting while men hold general manager positions. Despite females typically outnumbering males in a tourism or hospitality program at the university level, many were found to have left the field within three to five years of graduation (King, McKercher & Waryszak, 2003). These findings are worrisome

and could promulgate general stereotyping amongst the general public of staff and students regardless of gender. To combat these stereotypes when interacting with colleagues and peers, educators and industry leaders should take proactive steps to provide opportunities, celebrate achievements, and perhaps most importantly, educate staff and students. It will be important to undertake measures at organizational level to address such biases before they become further engrained in the dominant culture.

It is likely that undergraduate and postgraduate students may hold different opinions including stereotypical views. Various stakeholders, for instance, such as industry professionals, students, and educators have different views about the suitability of hospitality and tourism education as a postgraduate option for students who have completed undergraduate studies in another discipline (Cho, Erdem & Johanson, 2006). Future research should investigate the perceptions of graduate tourism and hospitality students in various settings vis-à-vis sub-degree and undergraduate education. Stereotypes such as professionalism and career progression may have lesser relevance given the likelihood that postgraduate students are middle or senior industry leaders.

From a methodological perspective, the use of a qualitative approach in this study provided a deeper conceptual investigation but limited capacity for generalization. Noting that the study was undertaken in North America, the results should be verified with students enrolled in business schools within other major international universities. There are various tourism education providers, notably standalone hotel schools that incorporate a strong hospitality orientation and should be understood alongside business schools operating within a university environment. They often offer a mix of sub-degree, or tertiary-level education in more

vocationally-oriented settings. In this regard, future research could investigate the perceptions of students across departments, universities, and countries.

To conclude, this study applied scholarship from psychology to clarify some of the nuances in the literature with respect to stereotype formation, maintenance, and evaluation within the context of biases faced by tourism management students in a business school setting. Reputation and quality are critical factors for the survival of tourism education (Airey, 2014), and negativity bias in stereotypes may undermine reputations. The researchers hope that this study will ignite discussion about potential stereotype-reducing strategies so that practitioners and educators can combat such perceptions in a creative manner before they propagate throughout the academy.

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